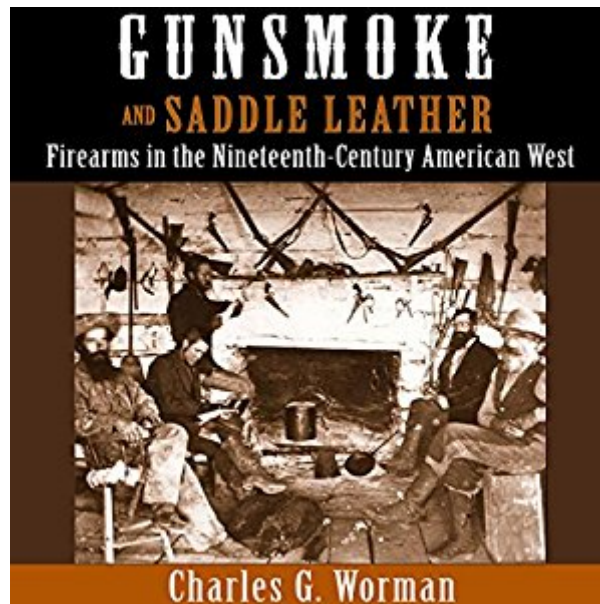


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# Gunsmoke And Saddle Leather: Firearms In The Nineteenth-Century American West



## Synopsis

The gun, like the axe and the plow, was an essential tool in the exploration and settlement of the trans-Mississippi West. It provided food for the cooking pot as well as protection against two- or four-legged marauders. Of course the employment of the gun, whether for good or evil, depended upon the user. The men and women who lived the 19th-century western experience sometimes described in detail the role firearms played in their lives. Such accounts included a trapper in the 1830s, a woman crossing the plains by wagon in the 1850s, a drover ("cowboy" in modern terminology) enduring the dangers of a long cattle drive, a professional hunter engaged in the slaughter of the once seemingly endless herds of bison, or a soldier campaigning against American Indians. Each account adds to our knowledge of firearms and our awareness of the struggle faced by those who were a part of the western experience. *Gunsmoke and Saddle Leather* describes the gun's impact on the lives of those in the West - men and women, whites and American Indians - using their own words to tell that story wherever possible.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 18 hours and 2 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: University Press Audiobooks

Audible.com Release Date: March 9, 2016

Language: English

ASIN: B01CPI3UAG

Best Sellers Rank: #34 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Nonfiction > Lifestyle & Home > Antiques & Collectibles #376 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Antiques & Collectibles > Firearms & Weapons > Firearms

## Customer Reviews

I received a copy of this book while recovering from major surgery and despite its bulk (500 plus pages), I couldn't put it down. I especially enjoyed the photos and detailed coverage of firearms use in frontier life in the 1800s, a topic I've not seen covered so well elsewhere. I also liked the chapters on women as shootist, the presence of foreign-made guns in the west, Indian Guns and frontier use of artillery by civilians and the army. I am not a student of antique firearms but have always been fascinated by the history of the American West. The first person accounts the author used added to

my understanding of the topic and made the book even more fascinating. This book is a great gift for someone who is a fan of the American West as well as firearms.

I first saw this big book at a local Western art store, and was fascinated by the many photos of the old West. It is a work of real art, allowing a reader to enter into a world that has been gone for generations. Worman is one of the world's leading experts on historic firearms, and that knowledge is brought to bear here, but his interest, and the book he has produced here, is much deeper than that. *Gunsmoke and Saddleleather* is a book for any student of American history, and any student of photography, as well as any firearms aficionado. There is something big in this book, beyond its size. It belongs on coffee tables and on bookshelves everywhere, so that people can pick it up, and gaze into the faces, weapons, and landscapes of a long ago time of hardship and danger and infinite promise. Like any work of great art, it is hard to put your finger on exactly what is happening in Worman's book- the letters that he excerpts here support the photos to create windows into that other time- tragedy, bravery, men and women putting it all on the line. Nostalgia is here, yes, but brutal reality, too. This book was a major influence on me, and I cannot recommend it highly enough. Hal Herring author of: *Famous Firearms of the Old West: From Wild Bill Hickok's Colt Revolvers to Geronimo's Winchester, Twelve Guns That Shaped Our History*]]

*Gunsmoke and Saddle Leather* Charles Worman is the co-author of the highly acclaimed two volume series "Firearms of the American West 1803-1894" but this isn't just a rewrite of that series. Instead in more than 500 pages he provides additional information and photos covering the same period--guns used by civilians, the army, and Native Americans in the 19th century trans-Mississippi west. His extensive use of quotes by those who lived during those times and used the firearms of that era adds to the relevance of the book. Trappers and early explorers, gold seekers, foreign visitors to the frontier, lawmen, women shootists, cowboys (drover was a more common term of that era), men engaged in the bloody slaughter of the bison, Mormons, soldiers -all are portrayed here. The text flows smoothly and the author's extensive research effort to gather this data and locate the hundreds of photos found here is apparent. There's an extensive bibliography, detailed index, plus a list of museums which exhibit firearms of that era. If I had to find any fault with the book it would be that the publisher chose to use a textured rather than a glossy slick paper which detracts a little from the sharpness of the photos but that's a minor complaint. Without reservation I give the book a five star rating.

great book, coffee table size with tons of photos of great old guns, many of the guns photographed were "dug" at some western site and are old rusted relics that really saw action in the old west. A lot of history packed into this book, the photos make your mind race back to the era of the old west and how these tools of the westerns were carried and used on a daily basis. high recommendation

I've just started in on reading it but I found the book to have a lot of information about various firearms used in the West, including pre-Civil war days. It's a big book with several chapters divided between the different types of firearms, the periods in which they were used, and the people who used them. I especially remember chapters on Buffalo hunting, several on gun brands, and one on the women who used these weapons. Each chapter has several photographs, some of these are period originals and some are of the guns as they are now found in a variety of private and public collections (the photos could stand to be a little larger and clearer to make them easier to examine). There is a very long footnoted bibliography at the back of the book, and much of the text is quoted material from these older (often period) works. The book is better suited to reading in several sittings, a chapter at a time. I think I'll learn a lot while reading it but I wish there was more information on how the guns were used, not just that this person used that gun or some certain gun was more favored for one thing or another. I remember very little "saddleleather" information, that might be a little bit misleading in the title.

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